

Every one has noticed how commonly the Crow caws in triplets — *caw, caw, caw*. Several years ago I found that a Crow near my house had a habit of giving four short caws in groups of two — *caw-caw, caw-caw* — and before long I discovered that other Crows in various localities many miles apart cawed in the same way. I came to call this, after the fashion of the fire-alarm, the 22 call. My attention being directed to this habit, I learned that this was by no means the only number in the Crows' fire-alarm system. My notes for August 19, 1915, read as follows: "Heard a Crow near the house this morning that cawed the number 21 (*caw caw (rest) caw*) a large number of times in succession — perhaps twenty or twenty-five times. The caws were short. This was followed by five short caws delivered two or three times, then two or three groups of three long caws, two or three groups of four long caws, and the 22 call delivered a few times. (I am not sure that I remember these various calls in the exact order.)" And for October 22, 1916: "A Crow near our house this morning gave over and over again many times a group of caws like the number 211 on the fire-alarm, occupying two or three seconds. The time was so regular that I could detect no variation. The length of the several notes was uniform, I think, and so were the pitch and the quality, the rhythm being all that differentiated the phrase from other performances of the Crow." And for March 14, 1917: "A Crow this morning cawed 211 several times very rapidly; i. e., each phrase was rapidly delivered."

Now, intelligent as the Crow is reputed to be, I do not believe that he has invented a Morse code of signals to convey information to his companions. Nor, on the other hand, does it seem reasonable to suppose that these performances are purely mechanical and involuntary. How can we escape the belief that the bird takes a delight, not only in the exercise of his vocal organs but also in the rhythm and the variety of his utterances? Is he not, in a limited way, a true artist, a composer as well as a performer? I ask it in all seriousness.

I have long believed with Mr. Henry Oldys that birds take an æsthetic pleasure in their own songs, and the case of the Crow seems to support this view so strongly that I have ventured to call attention to it. In support of the mechanistic view of bird-song the case of birds with cracked voices and similar imperfections has been cited. It is pointed out that such birds sing as vociferously as the good singers of their respective species, and it is argued that if they possessed any æsthetic sense shame would keep them silent. This argument would carry more weight with me if I had not heard so many shameless human singers, whistlers, and cornetists whose performances gave pleasure only to themselves and positive pain to most of their hearers! — FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Mass.*

Magpie (*Pica pica hudsonia*) in Northeastern Illinois.— The only actual capture of a Black-billed Magpie in Illinois that has come to my

notice, is an adult male in perfect plumage, which has recently been mounted by R. A. Turtle, the Chicago taxidermist.

This specimen was taken November 10, 1918, by Mr. J. Copley, who saw two strange birds in a ravine at Lake Forest, one of which seemed to be crippled. He caught it and kept it alive for two or three days, when it died. About half the upper mandible was missing, evidently from an old wound; its stomach was empty.

Its mate flew off and was not seen again.—HENRY K. COALE, *Highland Park, Illinois.*

Proper Name of the Tree Sparrow.—The correct name of the Tree Sparrow must still be determined. We are not specialists in the American avifauna but herewith adduce facts that *Spizella monticola* (Gmelin) cannot be maintained. In 'The Austral Avian Record' (Vol. iii, No. 2, p. 41, Nov. 19, 1915) we wrote as follows: "*Fringilla canadensis* (Boddaert). This name, given on p. 13 to pl. 223 f. 2 was not admitted in the 'Catalogue of Birds,' and does not seem to have since been recognized. Consequently the name used for the bird there figured, viz., *Spizella monticola* Gmelin, still persists in the Amer. Ornith. Union Check-List 3rd edition p. 263, 1910. As Gmelin's name (Syst. Nat., p. 912, 1789) is absolutely equivalent and later than Boddaert's, the bird must be known as *Spizella canadensis* Boddaert."

Oberholser (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., Vol. 31, p. 98, June 29, 1918) rejects Boddaert's name, concluding that without doubt the figures and description apply to *Zonotrichia leucophrys* but stating that Gmelin's name is still correct for the Tree Sparrow.

Gmelin cites 1st *Passer canadensis* Briss; 2 Soulciet Buff; 3 Moineau de Canada Buff.; 4 Mountain Finch Lath.; 5 Tree Finch, Arct. Zoöl. The first three references are the basis of Boddaert's name and must also be accepted as the foundation of Gmelin's species so that when it is concluded that Boddaert's name is inapplicable, so also must Gmelin's be. There does not seem to be any word in Gmelin's description controverting the above references, and Oberholser's continued acceptance of Gmelin's name is inexplicable. We do not question for a moment the accuracy of his determination of Boddaert's species, but the conclusion is that the figures have never before been critically examined.—G. M. MATHEWS AND TOM IREDALE, *England.*

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Connecticut in November.—On November 4, 1918, I observed a Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Zamelodia ludoviciana*) at Norwalk, Conn. The bird was in the plumage of an adult female, and was so tame that it was observed clearly from a distance of less than ten feet. However it was at a time when I was not equipped for collecting, and in a place where collecting would have been impossible. There are two other November records of this species from Connecticut.—ARETAS A. SAUNDERS, *Norwalk, Conn.*